Political Science 100

First Year Seminar: Media and Politics Election 2000

Tues Thurs 10:30-12:15
Sayles-Hill 253

Professor: Barbara Allen
Office: Willis 408
Phone: Ext. 4084

The Course

This seminar will introduce you to the basic methods of political analysis through a case study of media and politics in the 2000 elections. We will study how media influence campaign spending and organization, consider the various methods by which candidates package their messages, and the overall effect of media on electoral politics. Various concepts from public opinion analysis and the fields of political behavior and political psychology will be used to understand campaigns and elections. Students must have access to a television and radio for nightly analysis of campaign new and will be required to subscribe to the New York Times. In addition to following the presidential and congressional elections in general, we will focus on the Minnesota 4th and 1st Congressional districts and US Senate races to learn more about local news coverage and political participation. The class will work with students from PS 204 and PS 312 on the Alliance for Better Campaigns project.

The following books have been ordered for the course:


On reserve are:

Adler and Towne. "Listening v. Hearing"


Dohaghy. "Asking and Answering Questions"


Lynda Lee Kaid, et al. 1986. New Perspectives on Political Advertising, Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press. 0-8093-1264-6 (The chapters that we are using)

David Stewart and Prem Shamdasani. *Focus Groups: Theory and Practice.*


Andrew Kohut and Kimberly Parker, "Talk Radio and Gender Politics," in Norris, ed. Women Media and Politics. 221-234.


**Course Requirements**

Below are the readings and general topics for each of our meetings. In addition to coming to class prepared to discuss the readings you will be involved as a group in data collection with for a research project that also involves the students from PS 204 and PS 312. We will be monitoring campaign ads and news coverage of the campaign throughout the course. Our findings will be reported by the Alliance for Better Campaigns as part of their election 2000 media watch. The data that you collect will provide the basic information for your analysis of the 2000 election results. The PS 204 and PS 312 classes are involved in several other aspects of this research, involving a number of guest speakers and other activities. I've listed these events on the syllabus and you are invited to take part if you wish. Your second project, "Ad Watch Analysis," focuses on specific television campaign ads, analyzing their scripts, visual texts, and evaluating the accuracy of their messages. The final project for this course will be an analysis of the 2000 election results, focusing on the role media played in the election.

Grades will be computed as:

| Media Monitoring & Content Analysis | 35 |
| Ad Watch Analysis | 35 |
| Election Analysis | 30 |
| Total | 100% |

**Topics for Discussion and Reading Assignments:**

**Part 1: Democratic Theory and the Power of Media**

Tues Sept 12 Introduction to the course

Communication and Self-Government
Read: Graber Ch 2
Alger Ch 1

Thurs Sept 14 Studying Media: Research Design - Content Analysis
   Professor Dean Alger "The Alliance for Better Campaigns Project"
   Read: Just Ch 1-2

Tues Sept 19 Media as an Institution
   Read: Cook Ch 4-5
   Recommended: Alger 4-6

Thurs Sept 21 Federalism and other Multi-tiered Designs
   Read: Federalist 1, 10, 15, 23,45-51;

PS 204 and PS312 Joint Session I: Interviewing techniques - Active Listening
   Tom Skovholt, counseling psychologist, University of Minnesota
   Read: Adler and Towne, "Listening v. Hearing" and Dohaghy,
   "Asking and Answering Questions" (on reserve)

**Part 2: Media and Politics: Public Opinion, Socialization, and Participation**

Tues Sept 26 Representation and Responsibility: Framing Effects
   Read Iyengar "How Citizens Think" (on reserve)
   Alger Ch 2

**********************************************Content Analysis Part 1 due**********************************************

Thurs Sept 28 Public Opinion 1: Definitions and Measurement
   Read: Graber Ch 12
   Iyengar and Kinder Ch 1-6
   Allen "Tocqueville and Spiral of Silence" (on reserve)

Thur Oct 3 Public Opinion 3: Information Processing Models and Political Socialization
   Iyengar and Kinder Ch 6-12

PS 204 PS 312 Joint Session II Leading Focus Groups; Coding for Cultural Values, framing and priming effects
   Read: Krueger, Focus Groups Ch 4-6 (pp. 53-125) or Steward and Shamdasani, Focus Groups Ch 2-5 (33-101)
   Guest Dan StevensTues
Thurs Oct 5 Public Opinion 2: Narrative and Symbolism in News Reporting

Read: Alger Ch 3
Graber Ch 6, 10

********************************************Ad Watch Analysis Due********************************************

Tues Oct 10 Public Opinion 3: Agenda Setting

Graber Ch 7-8, 22, 36

Thurs Oct 12 Public Opinion 4: Framing and Priming Effects, Participation

Review: Iyengar and Kinder Ch 3-4, 7, 11
Read: Cook Ch 6, Graber 13, 14, 24
Recommended (?): Allen et.al "Media and the Gulf War" (on reserve)

Part 3: Media and Electoral Politics

Tues Oct 17 Primaries, Conventions and General Elections

Covering Candidates and Campaigns

Read: Alger Ch 10, 11, 290-324; 334-338
Just, Ch 3;
Graber Ch 16
Kaid Ch 3, (Kolar "Fighting Back: American Political Parties Take to the Airwaves") (on reserve)

*********View Primary - Documentary of 1960 Wisconsin Presidential Primary*********

Thurs Oct 19 Candidate Information 1: Speeches and Debates

Read: Alger Ch 12, 338-353

Tues Oct 24 Candidate Information 2: Campaign Advertising and Coverage

Read: Alger Ch 11 324-334, Just 4-6
Graber 13, 14
Kaid, Ch 1 (Jamieson, "The Evolution of Political Advertising in America") (on reserve)

Thurs Oct 26 Candidate Information 3: Campaign Advertising, Analysis

Read: Alger Ch 12, 353-378 and Kaid, Ch 2 (Devlin, "An Analysis of Presidential Television Commercials 1952-1982") (on reserve) and Ch 7 (Kaid and Davidson, "Elements of Videostyle")
Just 7
Tues Oct 31 Candidate Information 4: Campaign Advertising, Effects

Read: Alger Ch 13; Kaid, Ch 8, (Kundy, "Political Commercials and Candidate Image: The Effect Can Be Substantial") (on reserve)

Graber 17

Just 8

Thurs Nov 2 TV: racial attitudes and gender gap

Read: Carlson and Trichtinger, "Perspectives on Entertainment"

Kern and Just, "A Gender Gap Among Viewers,"

Fife, "Racial Diversity"

Iyengar, et al. "Running as a Woman" (on reserve)

Tues Nov 7 Talk Radio

Read: Kohut and Parker, "Talk Radio and Gender Politics"

Knight and Barker, "Talk Radio Turns the Tide"? (on reserve)

Election Party at Twin Cities News Stations, host Dean Alger

******************************Content Analysis Parts 2&3 due*******************************

******************************Evening Session on Election Results Campaign Headquarters and KTCA Studio, St Paul Radison, State Office Bldg Media Center, Minneapolis Convention Center, Meet at Willis at 5:15 p.m. Return to campus 1:00 a.m.******************************

Thurs Nov 9 Interpreting Messages and Voting - Assessing the Election

Just 9

Tues Nov 14 Discourse and Decisions, Prospects for Change

Just Ch 10

Cook Ch 8

******************************Election 2000 Analysis Due in Class******************************